

Application No. 10/721,846

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) An air bladder packaging system for packing an item having sides in an outer box having walls wherein a space exists between a side and a wall, such packaging system comprising:

an inflatable center body for placement proximate to one surface of the item;
a plurality of inflatable fingers attached to the center body and having a length, at least a portion of the length of a first inflatable finger being designed for placement along a first side of the item in the space between the side and a wall of the outer box wherein the fingers are comprised of essentially inelastic material and wherein a second finger has a length and at least a portion of the length of the second finger is designed for placement along a second side of the item; and

a valve through which compressed gas may be inserted into the air bladder;
wherein, once sufficient gas is inserted, a portion of the finger spans the space between the side of the item and the wall of the box.

2. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the valve is located on one of the fingers.

3. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, further comprising a filling tube on which the valve is located.

4. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the center body is essentially round.

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5. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the center body is essentially rectangular.

6. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the fingers are essentially tubular shaped.

7. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of fingers comprises four fingers.

8. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of fingers comprises more than four fingers.

9. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of valves.

10. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the valve comprises a two-way valve for both inserting and releasing gas from the air bladder.

11. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the air bladder is designed to be reusable.

12. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the fingers and center body are comprised of biodegradable compositions.

13. (Original) The packaging system of claim 1, further comprising at least a partial seam between the fingers and the center body wherein placement of the length of the fingers in the space between the side and the wall is facilitated by folding the air bladder at the seam.

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14. (Withdrawn) A process for packing an item having sides in an outer box having walls, comprising:

placing a center body of an air bladder proximate to a surface of the item;

positioning at least a portion of a finger of the air bladder along a side of the item in the space between the side and a wall of the outer box; and

inflating the finger sufficiently to span the space between the side and the wall.

15. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, wherein inflating further comprises inserting compressed gas in a valve located on the center body.

16. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, wherein inflating further comprises inserting compressed gas through a plurality of valves.

17. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, further comprising releasing compressed gas from the air bladder during unpacking of the item.

18. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, further comprising reusing the air bladder to pack a second item.

19. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, wherein positioning further comprises using a tool to fully extend the fingers towards the bottom of the box.

20. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, further comprising placing additional packing material to fill a space between the inflated air bladder and the top of the box.

21. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, further comprising placing additional packing material inside the box underneath the item.

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22. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, further comprising inflating all of the fingers and the center body.

23. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, wherein the item being packed is an electrophotographic printer.

24. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, further comprising carrying air bladders on a vehicle to enable packing of items remotely from manufacturing facilities.

25. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 14, further comprising selecting a used item for packing.

26. (New) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of inflatable fingers enclose uninterrupted interior volumes.

27. (New) The packaging system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of inflatable fingers lack apertures and are not designed for interlocking with one another.